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## ARTICLE IV.

## CORRESPONDENCE ON PEACE.

## I. DR. ALLEN'S LETTER TO MR. LADD.

DEAR SIR, I have received the Ninth Report of the American Peace Society, in which is published the revised constitution of that Society, Article II of which is as follows: "This Society, being founded on the principle, that *all war is contrary to the spirit of the gospel*, shall have for its object to illustrate the inconsistency of war with Christianity, to show its baleful influence on all the great interests of mankind, and to devise means for insuring universal and permanent peace." I perceive, also, by the same Report, that my name is printed among the *Vice Presidents* of the Society. By the Advocate of Peace for June, I also find, that great importance is attached by the managers of that publication to the change effected by that article in the constitution of the Society.

Now, my dear Sir, it happens, that one of your *Vice Presidents* does not believe the truth of the principle asserted in that article, and on which, as that article asserts, your Society is founded. I have never been a believer in that principle. On the contrary, I had occasion to write for your former publication, the Calumet of January and February, 1834, and May and June, 1834, the pieces entitled "Defensive War vindicated," designed to refute the assertion of Mr. Grimké, "war in any shape, from any motive, and carried on in any mode, is utterly indefensible on Christian principles, and utterly irreconcilable with a Christian spirit."

I am not now a believer in the Quaker principle of the criminality of defensive war. I ought not, therefore, to lend even the poor support of my name to a principle which I think not founded upon the gospel, not true, and blasting to the prospects of usefulness of a Society in which I have felt an interest, and which I hoped would tend to correct the public opinion concerning war.

Nor am I alone in this strange predicament, of being nominally a high officer in a society, whose leading principle is not credited, but regarded as erroneous and pernicious. It was but a short time ago, that I was conversing with a gentleman, whose name appears in your list of officers, and who expressed views on this subject in perfect accordance with my own.

I find myself, I must confess, in a singular situation. A few years ago, I became a *life-member* of the American Peace Society, when it was constituted on principles which did not touch the question of defensive war. I took pleasure in contributing to its funds, in writing for the pages of its periodical, and in recommending its design. But now I learn, that the Society has a revised constitution, the second and chief article of which is, that "*all war* [of course *defensive* as well as *offensive*] is contrary to the spirit of the gospel." The effect of this change, I suppose,—unless I myself change too, and say, "*tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*,"—is to remove me from a membership in the American Peace Society, as it now is. I

am content. But I shall be happy again to assist the Society, should it, after a sufficient trial of the new basis on which it now rests, return to its primitive principles. Indeed, I trust it will return to them. I am persuaded, that it can never truly flourish, can never touch beneficially the great interests of this country, or of any other country, until it does return to them.

As I am compelled, by the circumstances in which I am placed, thus publicly to address you, I hope you will permit me freely to express my views, and will cause my letter to be inserted in the *Advocate*, especially as the *Advocate* makes the promise, "on all points of this great subject, we shall open our pages to a fair and full exhibition of both sides." Allow me, then, to state the reasons why I dissent from the leading principle on which your Society is now founded, and why I believe that *defensive war is in harmony with the spirit of the gospel*.

I. I dissent from your leading principle, because I am persuaded, that it will prove an insuperable obstacle to any great results from your Society. *With* that principle, the statesmen who govern the world must look upon the Society as a body of visionaries and fanatics, ignorant of the world's affairs; whereas, with the primitive constitution, the Society was in a fair way to make converts of even illustrious statesmen. *With* that principle, public opinion will regard the Society, as it has regarded Quakerism for a century and a half, as a dream of weak benevolence, and not a practical system, like the gospel.

I am aware, that you may say, 'truth is to be maintained, though statesmen reject it, and the public opinion scoff at it.' This is what I myself maintain; and the *truth* of your principle I shall soon examine. But at present, the probabilities of success in the world are the subject of consideration. And how can a society succeed, which says to men, 'You must not resist the robber, the assassin, the murderer, but must yield yourself to his will?' You may struggle for life, if attacked by a wolf or a mad bull; but if a demon in human shape aims his knife at your throat, you must not resist him, or, if you do resist him, it must not be with a deadly weapon. If you are the Governor of Massachusetts, and a ship's crew of a hundred pirates should approach Boston, to sack, to burn, to ravish, and to murder, 'you must not be so unchristian as to order the cannon of the castle to be turned upon that ship with a black flag; you must not allow the "Ancient and Honorable," nor any other Boston company, to rush with deadly weapons upon the brutal crew, as they are landing on Long Wharf. No man, at his own door, may lift his hand to defend his life, and the honor of his wife and daughters.' How can a society which says this, meet else than general scorn in the community?

Nor can it be alleged, that you do not say this. Your *principle*, denying the right of defensive war, *does* say this. Moreover, in the pieces referred to, I put the precise question to Mr. Grimké in 1834, whether, if he was the chief magistrate of Charleston, and a ship of lustful, bloodthirsty pirates should approach, he should think the gospel forbade him to defend the city by firing a cannon at the pirate ship. His reply was, that a "Christian magistrate acknowledges the law of love and forgiveness as above all human regulations;" that in such a case he must resign his office, or should make proclama-

tion, that all the churches be opened, and prayers be addressed to God to change the hearts of the invaders; and then, that he would throw open the gate fronting the enemy, and would meet them in a procession of the clergy, and of Sunday school teachers and scholars, "dressed in the white robes of peace." Such a spectacle, he thinks, would "soften the hearts, and change the purposes of that band of greedy, lustful, bloodthirsty pirates!" (Calumet, 1835, p. 177.)

Such is the honest carrying out of the principle on which the American Peace Society is *now* founded. It annihilates government. It delivers the sheep and the lambs over to the wolf. It would be a very satisfactory doctrine to the corsairs of Barbary, and the pirates of the West Indies. It would put it in the power of one fiendish man to glut all his appetites, and to indulge all his ferocious passions in every village of New England. But surely, any comment is unnecessary on the acknowledgment of Mr. Grimké.

The God of nature has given to man the right of self-defence,—a right recognised in the Jewish law. The gospel has not repealed the grant. How can a principle which is contrary to the law of nature be acceptable to the common sense of men? Indeed, I fear, that the gospel itself, if this misconstruction should be fastened upon it, would find this misconstruction a greater obstacle to its success than the resistance and persecutions of kings and emperors. But this dead weight, as I shall soon show, does not hang upon the gospel; for the gospel asserts the power of the magistrate, whose chief business is the protection, by a deadly instrument,—the sword,—of the property and lives of the citizens against the invaders of property and life.

2. I dissent from your principle, because it is not supported by the voice of the Christian church in any age.

Not a writer among the Christian fathers, for a century after the birth of Christ, alludes to the question of the right of war. In the second century, there were many soldiers in the Roman army in Germany, as is proved by Tertullian's Apology, who also boasts, that Christians *swarmed* in the Roman camps, and says, "we sail, we *war* with you;" that is, 'we are your fellow-soldiers.' In the third and fourth centuries, some few writers may have expressed sentiments adverse to defensive as well as offensive war. But then, as Mr. Thomas Clarkson admits, many Christians were soldiers; and other writers maintained different views. The Anabaptists in Germany, Erasmus, and the Quakers, have in modern times advanced the principle of non-resistance; but, with these exceptions,—with perhaps the heretical Manichaeans,—the church universal on the earth, in its highest aims to promote the principles of the gospel of peace, has never thought of disarming the magistrate, of overthrowing government, of pulling down court-houses and prisons, as a gentleman of your school in Massachusetts assured me he should be glad to see done, relying solely on the gospel for the preservation of order. Has the church for eighteen centuries totally mistaken the bearing of the gospel on human society? I doubt not, that the gospel, when it shall triumph in the hearts of all, will establish universal peace. But in the mean time, *while* there are murderers, the sword of the magistrate must cut them off, and preserve the virtuous and the good from the violence of ruffians. But if you say, 'only obey the gospel, and Providence will protect you!' here you

assume, that non-resistance is obedience to the gospel; and are we to look, at the present day, for miracles?

3. I dissent from your principle, because it is founded on a mis-construction of some of the precepts of Christ.

In the 5th chapter of Matthew are the precepts, "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever will smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him take thy cloak also; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away."

The innumerable commentators on the Bible, from the early ages of the church, have considered these words as enjoining a *meek and peaceful disposition*, not as to be understood literally, and only literally; for in that case, if you should be smitten on the *left* cheek, instead of the right, Christ's instructions would not reach you. We are to ask, "What did Jesus mean to teach? What disposition or temper would he enjoin?" Indeed, in regard to the precept, "give to him that asketh thee," the most determined Quaker will not take the words literally, but will modify and explain them, so as not to be compelled to give away all his property to a sturdy beggar. The Quaker is right; he understands that the words only recommend a charitable disposition. Why, then, does he not understand, in a similar manner, the other precept, "resist not evil," as recommending only a meek disposition, not as delivering up human society into the hands of a ruffian?

Other precepts of Christ in the same chapter are these: "Love your enemies; do good to them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

If you argue from these words against defensive war, you must also argue from them against the punishment of any criminal. A man murders your son, or robs you and burns up your house; do you think, that it was the design of Christ to prohibit you from appealing to the magistrate for the punishment of the evil-doer? Yet, the magistrate is *the minister of God*, appointed for this very purpose, *to punish evil-doers*; and this you learn from Paul, the most eminent preacher of the gospel, the chosen apostle of Jesus Christ. Did he not understand the gospel?

Let it be, that you must *not hate your enemy*. You ought not to hate him. But, without hating him, you may summon the murderer of your son to the bar of the magistrate; the jury should bring in their verdict of "guilty," without hating him; and the judge should pronounce the awful sentence of the law, without hating him; and the officer, who is emphatically and finally the minister of God's justice, should execute the sentence of the law, without hating him. And if the poor wretch should appeal to yourself, you should be able to say, "I do not hate you, although you have murdered my son; but the claims of justice, the order of society, the security of the lives of others, the injunctions of the highest benevolence, and the express command of God,—*he that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*,"—require you to be capitally punished; and, with all my abhorrence of you, sincerely will I pray for you,—*"God have mercy on your soul!"*"

Did Christ, then, mean to prohibit the capital punishment of murderers, when he said, "Love your enemies?" Dr. Paley's remarks on these precepts of Christ may here well be remembered: "These

rules were designed to regulate personal conduct from personal motives, and for this purpose alone." "The precepts, or rather the dispositions which these precepts inculcate, relate to personal conduct from personal motives; to cases in which men act from impulse for themselves and from themselves. When it comes to be considered what is necessary to be done for the sake of the public, and out of regard to the general welfare (which considerations, for the most part, ought exclusively to govern the duties of men in public stations), it comes to a case to which the rules do not belong."

By overlooking this distinction of Dr. Paley, and by wrong views of the origin of government, a distinguished writer of our country has fallen into an obvious inconsistency in his valuable work on morals. He admits the right of the magistrate to "punish," and to punish so as "to prevent a repetition" of the offence by the individual or others; that is, a right to punish by way of example or warning. He admits the right of capital punishment for murder. He admits the obligation of society "to defend" the individual, and of course by physical force, by deadly instruments; and the obligation to cause justice to be done to the individual. These admissions are enough to establish the right and the obligation of defensive war, when citizens are unjustly attacked by a foreign power; for the magistrate is bound to *protect*, to *defend* the citizens, and to redress their wrongs; and he may *punish*, so as to "prevent a repetition" of the attack. Yet, afterwards, he just overturns his own principles; for he says, the individual is bound to *forgive* the offending party, and he has no right to authorize society to do otherwise; and hence all wars seem to be contrary to the revealed will of God. God commands us to love all men; therefore God forbids all war.

The fallacy here is either in supposing, that the precept to *forgive* applies to the case of the magistrate, or that the magistrate may not *forgive* while he punishes; and also in supposing, that the duties of rulers depend on express authority from individuals; whereas God has instituted government, and made it the duty of rulers to punish. The writer referred to admits the right to put to death the murderer; but is this to forgive the offender, and to *love* him, as he explains and applies the precept? Besides, what does he mean by saying, the individual has "the right to wield in his defence the whole power of society," if it is contrary to the gospel to wield physical force in driving back an invading foe?

But "God has subjected societies, as well as individuals, to the law of benevolence." This is true. Yet it does not apply to the case of punishment. That law does not prohibit the individual nor society from punishing for the public good. A magistrate is bound always to act from benevolence, and a regard to justice, and not from revenge and passion, in cutting off a criminal; and society is bound, in repelling an invading army, to have the same feelings as the magistrate in capitally punishing the murderer.

With his explanation of the precepts of Christ referred to, I suppose, that the writer, in order to be consistent, ought to deny to society as well as individuals the right of punishment altogether. To this result, my dear Sir, the Rev. H. C. Wright, who was lately, if he is not now, one of your agents, fearlessly and consistently arrived. He says, "What kind of civil government has God ordained in the gospel,—one that is to be administered on the law of violence,

or the law of love and forgiveness? Does the government that the gospel approves, permit its laws to be enforced by inflicting physical or corporeal punishments? I believe, that the gospel allows men to exercise no other government over each other, than one founded on the rule of love and forgiveness, of returning good for evil." I might here ask, what kind of *government* would this be? But he also says, "Surely, Christians have no right to unite with God's enemies in erecting a soulless, irresponsible, bloody MONSTER, to execute wrath and violence on those whom God, their Saviour, commands them to love and pity."

And has it come to this, that all government which wields physical force (and what is government in man or God without physical force?) is a "bloody MONSTER?" Shall we, then, disarm our magistrates, burn up our court-houses, and pull down our prisons?

4. I dissent from your principle, because it contradicts the plainest and most decisive instructions of the gospel. By the gospel, I mean the teaching of Christ, whether by himself personally, or by his apostles.

The following are the words of Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, 13th chapter: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God. He is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

Here we are taught distinctly, that rulers have their authority from God, and that they have the right of capital punishment, which is meant by *bearing the sword*, the sword being the usual instrument of execution. We are taught also, that the infliction of wrath upon evil-doers is in accordance with God's will. But suppose the evil-doers, instead of springing up singly in a community, should come in a band, in the shape of an army, to invade the public peace and desolate a country; is the ruler in this case to sheathe his sword, and deliver up the people to the will of every band of ruffians? Is the ruler to execute the *individual* murderer, but to bow his own neck and to deliver up the citizens to a *company* of murderers?

While the right, the power, the duty of the ruler, in respect to using the sword against evil-doers, and inflicting upon them wrath, is thus most distinctly announced by Paul, he has no where declared that all wars are contrary to the spirit of the gospel; nor has any other apostle, nor Jesus Christ thus spoken. It is true, that James asks, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, of your lusts, that war in your members?"

But *Calvin*, *Rosenmüller*, *Pott*, and other commentators, suppose, that there is here no reference to public war, but only to the divisions, the strife, the contentions of individuals, terminating sometimes in the loss of life. This meaning seems to be determined by the connection in the preceding verses, in which the apostle had spoken of bitter envying and strife, and recommended *peace*. But if the passage refers to war, it proves nothing as to a just, defensive war, though it condemns the wars of the Jewish people, to which it may refer.

Setting, then, this passage aside, is it not extraordinary, that throughout the whole gospel there is not to be found such a short sentence as this: "all wars are unlawful?" Is it not remarkable,

that Peter was sent to preach the gospel to a devout soldier, to Cornelius, first of all the Gentiles. Is it not remarkable, that Christ should commend the faith of the centurion, or captain of a hundred men? Is it not remarkable, that when soldiers came to John, and asked him, "What shall we do?" he did not command them to throw down their arms, instead of requiring them to be "content with their wages?" If all wars are utterly irreconcilable with the spirit of the gospel, why, in an affair of such immense importance to the welfare of the whole family of mankind, was the great Teacher of men entirely silent?

5. I dissent from your principle, because God has authorized and approved of wars, and commanded them. All war is not therefore in itself immoral.

Sometimes the Jewish law is represented as instituting a religion of severity and cruelty, and the gospel as restoring the long-lost sway of mercy and love; as though God was not in ancient times the same God that he is now, the same moral governor of the world, the same unchanging enemy of immorality and iniquity. God commanded the wars of Canaan. And before the Jewish law, when Abraham heard that Lot was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, and rushed to the rescue, and smote and dispersed the enemy; and in return from this self-moved war, he was met by Melchizedek, king of Salem, the great type of Christ, the priest of the Most High God, who blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."

If *all* wars are contrary to the spirit of the gospel, I do not believe that the priest of the Most High God, the type of Christ (if not, as many think, Christ himself), would have commended Abraham for this warlike exploit, and given God thanks for its result. On the contrary, he would have denounced upon the patriarch the anger of God, and bid him go and repent in dust and ashes. Jehovah, in the principles of his moral government, changeth not. He has approved of just wars; he approves of them now; and he will approve of them to the end of the world. Even after the thousand years of *peace* which the gospel will produce by its *universal* influence, Satan (we are informed, Rev. 20) will go out to deceive the nations and to gather them together to battle; "they will compass the camp of the saints and the holy city." But that will be the final battle of the earth; and the Almighty himself will wage it in his justice. He will not require his saints to go out in *Sabbath school procession* to *melt the hearts* of Satan's adherents; but he himself, in his avenging wrath, by fire from heaven will destroy them.

I have already said, my dear Sir, that I deplore the change of your constitution, because I foresee, in consequence of it, the destruction of the usefulness of the American Peace Society.

I doubt not, that in these days of extremes you may obtain some converts to your new principles. Indeed, one of your associates suggested to me the necessity of falling in with the spirit of the times. Yet you ought to look to others besides men of warm passions and headlong zeal. For the success of your society among the Christian churches, I suppose you must look to the great body of experienced ministers and reflecting Christians who are not borne away by an impracticable radicalism, but who have good sense,



strong judgments, sound wisdom. Can they be made to understand the gospel as you understand it? Must they not see, that your construction of the precepts of Christ goes to the abolition of all punishment in families and in society, and to the annihilation of all government?

For success also, I suppose, you must look to the great body of the citizens; for your whole hope is to operate by *public opinion*. And now it appears to me that you have a more difficult work before you, to bring public opinion to fall in with your views, than ever before was undertaken by a man of your experience and acquaintance with the world. Though you may admit, inconsistently with your construction of the precepts of Christ, the right of imprisonment, which is *doing evil* to the wicked, instead of *forgiving* them, yet others, more consistent, deny the right of punishment altogether. The plain, common sense people, whom you wish to convert to your faith, will, I am afraid, be disposed to ask you if you will punish at all. "How, Sir, if you may not use a deadly instrument, will you be able to catch the murderer, who has a sword in his hand? Will you noose him with a *lasso*, as the South American catches a wild bull? Can you even do this, for may he not carry a pistol or a rifle? May he not thus set at defiance all the authorities of the country, if they may not use against him a weapon of death? And should you get him into prison, how, without such a weapon, can you allow him even to take the air of the yard? And will you cruelly keep him shut up always in his cell? Is this to love and forgive him? Was it a crime in our fathers to resist the invading armies of Great Britain? Is it a crime in our southern and western brethren to defend themselves at any time against the tomahawk of the savage, or the assaults of ruffians and pirates?" Can you persuade the people to abandon all preparation for defence, and to give up their firesides and families to every invader? You go even further than Robert Barclay, the Quaker, by speaking for the present magistrates of the Christian world, who have not "come up to the pure dispensation." These are his words: "And therefore, while they are in that condition, we shall not say, that *war*, undertaken upon a just occasion, is altogether unlawful to them."

It is with unfeigned grief, that I am thus constrained to dwell upon what, in my view, are the blighted prospects of your society. You have done much for its interests; you have not withheld your money nor your labors in the cause of peace. The friends of the Peace Society were increasing. It was strong in argument and reason; and reasonable men could be addressed without blushing. By patience, you might have lived to see the fruit of your toils. But the age of radicalism had arrived. You saw the effects of flaming zeal, and you wished to enlist the energies of religious enthusiasm in the cause of your society, that it might thrive and grow rapidly, like some other institutions. The simplicity of the principle—the *gospel forbids all war*—which Mr. Grimké had advocated, struck you as admirable and efficient. A small ecclesiastical body far away in Michigan espoused the Quaker principle; and I think it has been stated, that a few other ecclesiastical bodies, whether Methodist or Baptist I know not, have followed in the same path. And now, at the late ninth annual meeting, the Peace Society, by a vote of the members present, have incorporated that principle into the constitution.

I most sincerely deplore the course which has been adopted; for I cannot resist the persuasion, that your society, in its present form, is to all important purposes and results dead. I have loved the American Peace Society; I have hoped for its success; but now I am not sure but many of its friends will be led to inquire, whether they have not mistaken the way of promoting peace?—whether the spread of the gospel is not a better way than laboring to propagate even the correct principles of peace abstractedly and separately?—whether it is possible to change the face of the world in regard to peace, except by the power on the human heart of the gospel of peace, preached by the intelligent, devoted ministers of Jesus Christ?

As I may never have occasion to address you again on the subject of peace, permit me to say, that I truly honor you for your past efforts in what I deem an excellent cause. Even in your toils to promote your new Quaker principle, I could wish you success, provided your first converts,—the first to be persuaded to abandon the “law of violence,” or the use of the sword,—shall be the men on whose eye the gleam of the sword of justice is terrifying, the robber, the pirate, the murderer, the men of crime and blood. But I trust, my dear Sir, that after a few years’ experience of your present plan,—for I hope you will yet live many years,—you will abandon it, and return to labors which promise a harvest, not of disappointment, but of great and permanent good.

WILLIAM ALLEN.

*Brunswick, Me., August 4, 1837.*

## II. MR. LADD’S ANSWER TO DR. ALLEN’S LETTER.

DEAR SIR, I received a copy of the Recorder, containing your letter to me, a fortnight after the date of the paper. Previous engagements have prevented me from answering it sooner, especially as the great importance of the subject of your letter, and the high respect I have always entertained for you, require that I should give every objection which you urge against the recent amendment of the constitution of the American Peace Society a due proportion of serious and prayerful consideration.

Having repeatedly perused your very able and ingenious letter, I sit down to answer it. I am fully sensible of the advantage you have over me in talents, acquirements, and station; yet, relying on the force of truth, and the assistance of the great Prince of peace in his own cause, I venture on the conflict in the same faith with which David met the champion of Israel’s enemies. Nor is it alone your talents, learning, station, and influence, which make up the fearful odds against me; you have on your side all the inclinations of depraved nature, the prejudices of education, and popular inclination, to all of which you make a very powerful appeal.

With this introduction, I take up your letter, and answer it article by article; but limited as I necessarily must be to a small space, I shall not be able to give your several objections all the attention they demand. It is always more easy to raise objections than to answer them. An infidel can raise more objections to Christianity in an hour, than a doctor of divinity can answer in a week.

It was intended, that a circular letter should have been sent to every officer of the society, soliciting his acceptance of his appointment, before publishing the annual report. Why this was not done

I cannot tell; but probably it was for want of time, and a sufficient number of assistants. The only remaining remedy is, if you request it, to erase your name from our list of officers, however reluctant we should be to lose its influence.

Your objections to the principle of total abstinence from all war, except the second, are old acquaintances, and for several years after I had devoted my life to the holy cause of peace, I entertained them in my own bosom; and it was not until I had been brought to view the whole subject by the clear light of the gospel, unobscured by the doctrine of expediency, and the darkness of frail human reason, and in view of the unspeakable, perhaps I should say infinite, value of the immortal soul, that I was brought, very reluctantly, to part with them.

In saying this, I do not mean to claim any superior discernment or devotion to the cause of truth; but I have read almost every thing which has been written since the Reformation on both sides; and more than that, I am free from disadvantages under which you labor, viz., your near relation to the heroes of the Revolution and of the last war, and your long and intimate acquaintance with heathen authors, both of which have probably, in some degree, unperceived by you, biassed your judgment.

Your objection to the *avowal* of our sentiments is founded on the doctrine of expediency. You fear that "the statesmen who govern the world must look upon the society as a body of visionaries." Thus did the Roman statesmen look on the primitive church. Sir, we never expect to gain "the statesmen who govern the world," until we have gained the church; and we do not expect to gain the church by the doctrine of expediency, but by the clear exhibition of gospel truth.

I take occasion here to observe, that the obnoxious change in the constitution was not sudden and unpremeditated. The subject had been repeatedly discussed, in public and in private; and in every discussion, the principle of total abstinence from all war gained ground, as the only principle which could secure the peace of the world. Under this impression, a committee was appointed, at the annual meeting of 1836, to revise the constitution. This committee had repeated conferences with the most active and intelligent friends of peace in different sections of the country; and they finally came to the conclusion, honestly to avow the sentiments which a majority of the friends of peace, both in this country and in England, had long entertained; considering that whatever is right, is also, in the long run, expedient. The society, at their annual meeting of 1837, unanimously adopted the amendment recommended by the committee. We knew that the change would be unpopular, and that many would therefore forsake us; but we knew also, that the goodness of a cause does not depend on the number of its supporters, or the amount of its funds. The only question worth inquiry is, what is truth? not, what is popular? The American Temperance Society, by its change from the low to the high principle, has lost many of its friends, but none of its power. A peace society which should allow its members to fight when they thought it necessary, might gain "the statesmen who govern the world," and the army and navy; but it would have no more effect in banishing war from the world, than a temperance society, which should allow its members to drink

rum when they thought it necessary, would have in banishing intemperance. Tamerlane and Napoleon, *par nobile fratum*, and all the vulgar herd of conquerors, would join such a society, and Satan would laugh at it. My dear Sir, do you think you are advancing the Millennium by advocating such a society, and opposing one founded on higher principles?

After having attempted to show the inexpediency of the adoption of the principle of total abstinence from all war by the society, you next endeavor to show the inexpediency of its adoption by a Christian community. To show this inexpediency, you conjure up a host of bugbears, not one of them drawn from actual history or matter of fact, but all from your very fruitful imagination; and endeavor to frighten us with the supposed consequences of adopting the pure principles of the gospel. When you can produce a single instance of a community that has adopted the principles of peace to their utmost extent, being invaded, massacred and destroyed, it may be time enough to urge the doctrine of expediency against those principles; but at present, you cannot produce *one*, while we can produce *many*, on the other side,—enough, if any were necessary, to confirm us in the belief, that “When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.” Prov. 11:7.

You fear that, if the principle of total abstinence from all war “should be fastened upon it,” namely, the gospel, this would be “a greater obstacle to its success than the resistance and persecutions of kings and emperors.” This is what the opponents of orthodoxy say of the doctrine of election, and the eternity of future punishment. They endeavor to bring down the gospel to the standard of their fallible reason, and so do you.

Under your second head, you attempt to prove that the primitive Christians engaged in war. *In this* you are original. All your other arguments have been a thousand times repeated. In order to prove your assertion, you say that “not a writer among the Christian fathers for a century after the birth of Christ, alludes to the question of the right of war.” There was no more call for the fathers of the primitive church to preach against war to their converts, than for the ministers of New England to preach against duelling. Such preaching would only have subjected themselves to the charge of attempting political changes, without doing any good; for the plain principles of the gospel were sufficient to keep the primitive Christians from war, while the church was pure. A Christian soldier was as rare a creature then, as a Christian duellist is now. You also quote a few words from Tertullian which could be easily accounted for, if I had room; but you say nothing of the copious extracts of a directly contrary character, which Clarkson quotes from the same Tertullian. The fact is, that the primitive Christians, for more than the two first centuries of the Christian era, “when the lamp of Christianity burnt bright,” did not fight, even in self-defence, as is abundantly proved by Clarkson, and more recently by Dymond; men who had ability and leisure to devote to such inquiries. But you object to them, that they are “Quakers.” I never suspected that Quakers were remarkable for falsehood and misrepresentation. But Gibbon was not a Quaker; nor was he likely to be under Quaker influence, and he is positive on the subject. I wish I had room for a whole paragraph in his “Decline and Fall of the Roman Em-

pire," extracted from chapter 15, cause 4. I take only one sentence chosen for its brevity. "While they [the Christians] inculcated the maxims of passive obedience, they refused to take any active part in the civil or *military* defence of the empire." Now could any thing be more pointed or more pertinent? Would a man who spent his whole life to build up his reputation on a single work, hazard it all by repeated and deliberate assertions of falsehood? This subject has been lately agitated in the Christian Mirror, and the very able and learned writer, who agrees with you in this thing, and perhaps is you yourself, has not yet seen fit to deny, that Celsus, who flourished near the close of the second century, did publicly attack the Christians, and asserted that "they refused in his times, to bear arms for the emperor, even in case of necessity, and when their services would have been accepted;" and this heathen writer brought the same arguments against the Christians in the second century, which you bring against the peace society in the nineteenth century, namely, a fear of the consequences. Nor does the writer in the Christian Mirror deny, that Origen, who answered Celsus in the third century, acknowledges the truth of the charge, but excuses the Christians for acting in conformity with their religion. All your arguments under this head would justify, not only defensive, but offensive war, when *expedient*!

Your third objection to our principles is founded on our supposed misinterpretation of the peaceable and benevolent precepts of our holy religion. It appears that you favor those precepts, if so interpreted as to suit your own feelings, but think that we carry them *too far*; and in order to make out your case, you gratuitously charge us with disaffection to the civil authority. This is a great mistake of yours; for there is nothing in our constitution, or official documents, which would lead any one, who chose to examine before he condemned, to suppose that we objected to the use of the sword of the magistrate in punishing crimes. We say, in the Advocate of Peace for June last, page 10, "We seek to effect such a change in public opinion, as shall secure a right and universal application of the gospel to the intercourse of Christian nations. *This is all we shall ever attempt.*" Again, pages 15 and 16 are entirely taken up with an article complaining of this mistake, and rectifying it; expressly stating, that "this cause contemplates *only* the intercourse of nations, and does *not* involve the right of nations to punish their own subjects, or put down mobs and insurrections by the sword." Again, in our last annual report, page 27 of the Advocate, we say, "Our object is to prevent war, and we do not feel ourselves, as a society, required, or permitted, to agitate the much vexed question, whether civil government has ever the right to take the life of its own subjects." The same sentiments, a hundred times repeated, are scattered through all our publications. Frequent meetings of the friends of peace were held, the winter before last, in Boston, in which this subject was discussed, and it was almost unanimously agreed, that the peace society should *not* interfere with the sword of the magistrate. Sir, you have taken a great deal of pains to demolish a phantom of your imagination.

Under the same head, in order to prove that we are wrong in saying that all war is contrary to the *spirit* of the gospel, you bring the *letter* of it. To please you, we will give up the letter. But our Sav-

your's precepts mean something. I beg you would not so explain them away, as to leave us neither the *letter* nor the *spirit*.

With your dispute with Dr. Paley we have nothing to do. He is on your side, and if he falls into inconsistencies, it is no more than what happens to every writer, who attempts to reconcile any war with the spirit of the gospel. I take this opportunity to remark, that it is strange that you should give your sanction as a text book, in the institution over which you preside, to an author whom you find so inconsistent as Paley, while you reject Wayland on the same subject, who has at least the merit of being consistent with himself.

We have as little to do with your dispute with Rev. H. C. Wright. If he broached such sentiments as you accuse him of, during the short time he was our agent, he did it without our knowledge, and on his own responsibility; and nearly one half of your letter should have been addressed to him, and not to us.

Throughout your whole letter, you identify the friends of peace with the opposers of capital punishment. Of this we have great reason to complain. The States of Maine and New Hampshire have, virtually, abolished capital punishment, while not a tenth part of the advocates of the measure are any more friendly to our principles than yourself. It is hard, indeed, to make us responsible for the errors of our enemies as well as of our friends. A great part of your letter is taken up in proving things which we do not deny; and this gives it the appearance of having the substance of a refutation of our supposed errors, while it has only the *shadow*.

Another argument which you bring against us, under your fourth head, is, that there is not found, in the gospel, the short sentence, "All wars are unlawful." Are then all sins allowed which are not expressly named in the gospel? Apply the same rule to slavery, suicide, polygamy, duelling, gambling, and a thousand other sins. The whole argument, in this paragraph, referring to Cornelius, the centurion, and the Roman soldiers, would justify offensive as well as defensive war. When you can prove that Roman soldiers, converted to Christianity, continued in the practice of *any* war, this argument will have some weight in justifying all war. Until then, it has only the merit of plausibility.

The argument, under your fifth head, which you draw from the wars of the Jews, is worth all the others. But you will please, Sir, to remember, that these were wars of invasion and conquest, destroying men, women and children. Every argument taken from the wars of the Jews which you have made use of, would justify offensive, as well as defensive war. Indeed, there is not, nor ever has been, any *practical* difference between them. All modern conquerors have declared their wars to be defensive. Bonaparte invaded Egypt to defend himself against British aggression. Britain bombarded Copenhagen, to defend herself against French invasion. We invaded Canada, to protect "free trade and sailor's rights;" and our present war with the Seminoles is called defensive, as well as the others; and yet you deny that all war is contrary to the spirit of the gospel!

Sir, I heartily thank you for your "unfeigned grief," over what you are pleased to call our "blighted prospects." You never expressed so much sympathy for us before, though all the communications with which, in former times, you have favored us, except a

short poetic effusion, and which we were so good-natured as to publish, have been attacks upon us. I hope your grief is not ominous of this last being the most fatal of them all. Had not your communications, entitled, "Defensive War Vindicated," been published in the *Calumet*, there would, probably, have been no occasion for amending the constitution. Had you used your fine talents in exposing the evils and sins attendant on all wars, as devotedly as you have in advocating the lawfulness of defensive war, the cause of peace, might, ere now, have been as forward as other benevolent causes. You will agree with me, in saying, that it is our friends that ruin us; but, perhaps, we shall not agree in the personal application of the assertion. I really believe, that no benevolent society had ever more reason to pray to be delivered from their friends. As much "unfeigned grief" has been expended over the "blighted prospects" of the American Temperance Society, occasioned, likewise, by their "radicalism;" but the tears shed over it, though precious, were thrown away; for the American Temperance Society has sustained the shock, and is now under full sail on the flood tide of successful experiment. I trust, that it will be the same with the American Peace Society, and the increased zeal and sacrifices of those who remain, will more than make amends for the loss of those who desert us.

You esteem our remaining friends but lightly; "the small ecclesiastical body away in Michigan;" "the Quaker principle;" "Methodists or Baptists, I know not which." You seem, Sir, to make the same inquiry, which was made by the Jews of old; "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" any of "the statesmen who govern the world?" Sir, please to remember, that the whole church of Christ has been convened in an upper chamber, and "despise not the day of small things."

I have now, Sir, gone over your letter, and answered section by section, and will here sum up the points on which we differ. *You* adopt the principle of *expediency* with Paley. *We* reject it with Wayland. *You* bring down the word of God to the standard of your own reason. *We* think a Christian ought to receive the word of God, "as a little child."

The spirit of the gospel is manifested in the following passages. "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" "the meek;" "the merciful;" "the peace-makers;" "Resist not evil;" "Love your enemies;" "Bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;" "Recompense to no man evil for evil;" "Avenge not yourselves;" "If thine enemy hunger, feed him;" "Overcome evil with good;" and a hundred other passages in the gospel of a like nature. These precepts were exemplified in the life and death of the Prince of peace. He died, that his enemies might live; and his last prayer was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is the spirit of the gospel.

The spirit of all war is proud, ferocious, unmerciful, the opposite of peace-making, resisting evil, doing hurt to those who hate us, rendering evil for evil, and cursing for cursing, overcoming evil with evil, &c. These sinful qualities have been exemplified in all wars not expressly commanded by God and, sanctioned by miracles; and this is the essence and spirit of all war.

Now we say, that these things are contrary one to the other; or

in other words, that *all war is contrary to the spirit of the gospel*. You deny it; let the Christian public judge between us.

I allow, that in the transition state of society from war to peace, there are difficulties to be encountered similar to those which attend the change from drunkenness to temperance; but these difficulties grow out of the previous habits of intemperance and war, and will vanish away, just as fast as Christians adopt the pure principles of the gospel. Like the lions which Pilgrim encountered on the hill of Difficulty, they will be found, on a near approach, to be chained and harmless; and none but a *timorous* man, who lacks faith, will be frightened at them, or be prevented from walking in the path of duty, though it may be *difficult*, or even dangerous.

Finally, the question seems to be, not so much whether all war be inconsistent with the gospel, as whether it be not *expedient* sometimes to bend the gospel to our circumstances, when our own safety and that of our wives, children, and country require it? We say no.

You have smitten us on one cheek; we turn the other. You have taken from us the *letter* of the gospel precepts; and we beseech you, leave us the spirit. You have taken away our coat, and we have given it up without murmuring; leave us our cloak. We would fain give you that also, but it is not ours to give; it is our Master's; and we shall "contend earnestly" for it. But "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal;" we shall use only the "sword of the Spirit," and look to God for help; and if we get the victory, give Him all the glory.

In view of the whole subject, we do not see why any one, who sincerely wishes to see the prophecies fulfilled, and wars and fightings cease, should withdraw his support and influence from the peace society, only because the leading men in it have expressed their belief in the abstract proposition, that all war is contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Our tracts, our lectures, and our measures will not be changed by this avowal. We shall still strive for a *congress of nations*, and we shall solicit the prayers and alms of Christians, as much as ever. We do not think there is any danger of making the world too peaceable. If any should think we go too far, that is not a sufficient reason why he should not go at all, or weaken our hands by encouraging any war. There are friends of war enough for that. If those who tolerate defensive war will not help us forward, they have no good reason for pulling us back.

Nevertheless, I am sorry to see an intimation, that this is the last I am to hear from you. I should be glad to continue the discussion; for I have been obliged to omit half my facts and arguments for want of room; fearing that, if I should be more prolix, I should be rejected by the editors, or at least, mutilated. Let us take up one topic at a time, and amicably and candidly discuss it; and particularly, let us not waste our time on subjects on which you do not know that we differ.

In conclusion, Sir, I beg you to accept the assurance of my high consideration and respect for your virtues, your talents, your acquirements and your station in society. Ever since our first acquaintance, I have always been your personal friend, and I hope I shall always remain, Yours in the bonds of peace,

Minot, Me., Sept. 12, 1837.

WM. LADD.

Mr. L. was obliged to be so brief on the most important point, that we shall take it up in a future number.—ED.